RESIDUE MANAGEMENT, RIDGE TILL

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 346

RESIDUE MANAGEMENT, RIDGE TILL

This practice is managing crop residue on a year-round basis and growing crops on ridges alternated with furrows protected by crop residue.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice generally applies to cropland, but may also be used on other areas where field crops are grown such as wildlife or recreation lands.

Growing crops on preformed ridges covered with crop residue requires specialized equipment for both cultivation and planting. At crop lay-by, or last cultivation, a disk cultivator reforms the ridges for the next crop. After harvest, the crop residue is left on the soil surface until the following crop is planted. The ridge planter is equipped with a tool to clear a narrow path on the ridge top to accommodate planting the seed.

The benefits of ridge till are significant. Soil slowly but steadily improves when erosion is reduced and organic matter increases. Soil tilth improves and productivity increases as the constant supply of organic material left on the soil surface is converted to humus by a healthy population of earthworms and other soil organisms. The surface residue plus the ridges and furrows provide excellent food and cover for wildlife.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Residue Management, Ridge Till is commonly used in a Conservation Management System with practices such as Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Nutrient Management (590), Pest Management (595), and Irrigation Water Management (449).

For more information, refer to the practice standard in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and associated specifications and design criteria.

The following page identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.

Residue Management, Ridge Till
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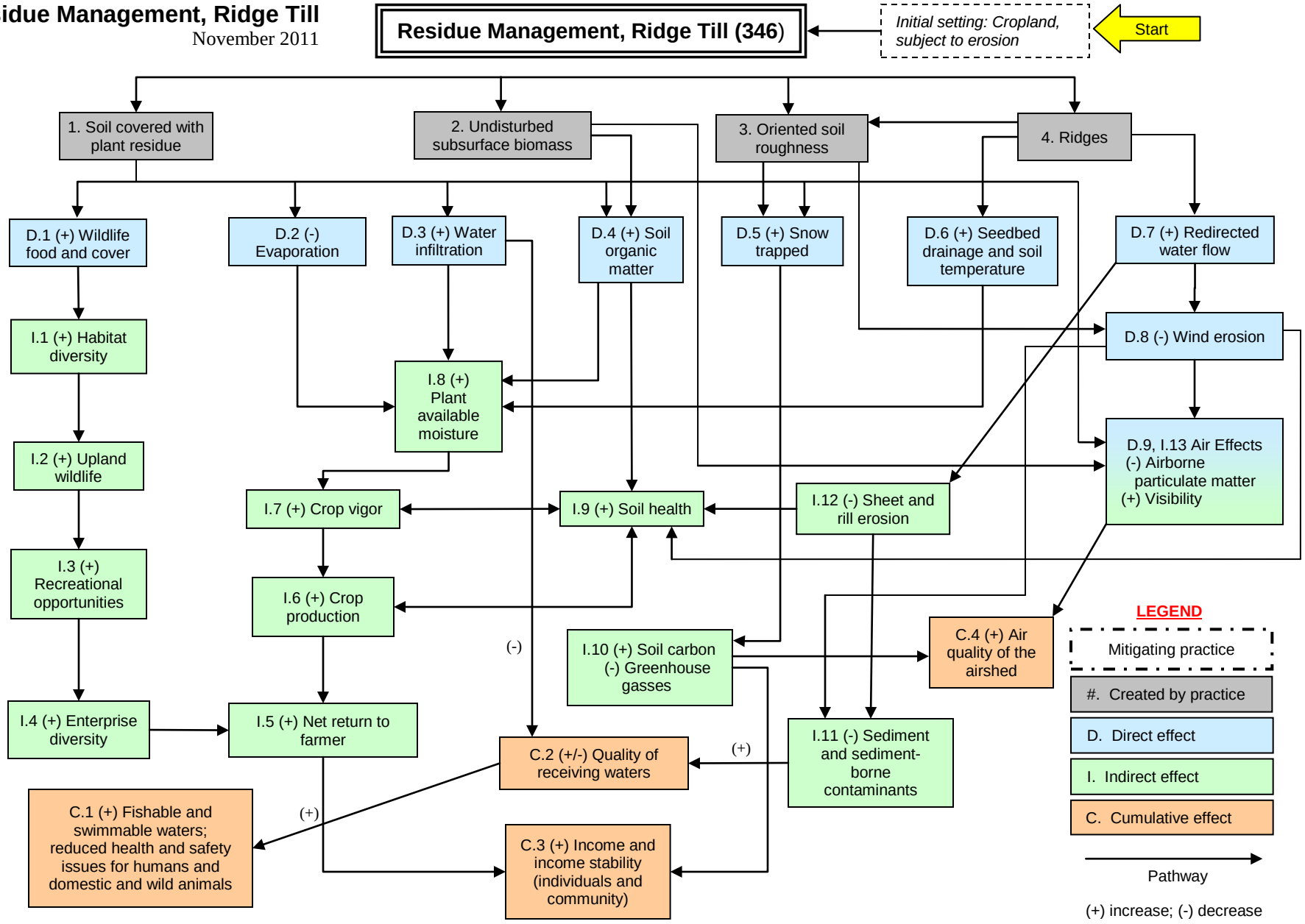

Note: Effects are qualified with a plus (+) or minus (-). These symbols indicate only an increase (+) or a decrease (-) in the effect upon the resource, not whether the effect is beneficial or adverse.

The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.